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In memoriam Prof. em. Dr. med. Tamio Kamei from Gunma University, Maebashi, Japan.



Prof. Emeritus Dr. med. Tamio Kamei, whom we called “the diplomat of Neurootology” , was born on January 2nd, 1933 at Maebashi, Gunma, Japan, where he also died on October, 22nd, 2010, i.e. very recently.

For us within the international community of neurootologists, as well as for all his friends, students and contemporarian ENT-specialists in Japan as well as in our worldwide network he was a very strong and reliable pillar in the field of otology, as well as of neurootology.

We now, after his passing away, recognize that we have lost an unforgettable clinical investigator, ear surgeon, lecturer, teacher and a especially a great man of modern medicine at home in Japan, as well as abroad.

I have met him first in 1977, when he participated in an international otolaryngological congress with an important branch into neurootology in Kyoto in Japan under the chairmanship of Prof.Dr.Hinoki and Prof. Dr.Fukuda being the honorary president.

When he approached me, he showed to be a cautious but also curious colleague, who was very much concerned about all his giddy and dizzy patients, whom he regularly had to meet in his clinic at Gunma University, Maebashi, Japan.

Then we sat together and he reported in his very friendly, unassuming, emphatic and attractive manner, that he had specialized for medicine in Gunma University, faculty of medicine after World War II from 1951 till 1957. He was grateful for his learning period in Japan. Thereafter he followed his career into ENT.

Thereafter he also received a postgraduate qualification in ENT and finally a professorship of ENT at the Gunma University, faculty of medicine, Maebashi, Japan. From this position he retired in 2004.

Due to his excellent reputation he was offered special positions within the academic Medical Community of Japan.

As a delegate from Japan he has attended several World Congresses of Otolaryngology (IFOS) abroad in Australia and other countries..

He also has participated in many other international congresses, like the Meetings of the international NEUROOTOLOGICAL AND EQUILIBRIOMETRIC SOCIETY Reg. in Japan and abroad.

Under the chairmanship of the congress president Prof. Dr. Dr. Eiji Sakata and the Vice-chairman, Professor Tamio Kamei, from Gunma University, Maebashi, Japan in Hakone, Japan., the XXIInd NES congress was very successfully convened from April 6th till 9th, 1995 at Hakone. For the international auditorium from all the continents it was a great pleasure to learn, how well Japanese culture and the success of modern Japanese and international research work together in the field of neurootology. On behalf of the members as well as of the board of the NES we have thanked also Professor Dr. Tamio Kamei for the excellent work , which he and his group had given to us.

Also the volume of this outstanding congress published with Elsevier’s “Ecerpta medica internationally” was very well accepted.

Further he contributed much to the field of neurootology in the international academy of equilibrium rese-

archers during the XXth Ordinary Meeting of the Bárány Society, convened from September 12th till 15th, 1998 in Wuerzburg, Germany, when I, being the Vice president of the Bárány Society, had the honour to organize and host this meeting at my University in Wuerzburg, Germany.

Very carefully and circumspectly he in close cooperation with our team organized an important Precongress Symposium of the Japanese Afternystagmus Study Group (ANSG), related also with the XXth Ordinary Meeting of the Bárány Society at Wuerzburg, with scientific papers, panels and posters which also were reported in the congress volume at the Elseviers Publishers, Amsterdam, within their congress series. His exceptional Work at such an international scientific event was very well recognized.

Throughout the years we learned more and more about the scientific spectrum from him and his scholars like for instance the following arbitrarily selected citations:

Takahashi, S. and Kamei, T.:

The clinical significance of head-shaking nystagmus.

Proc.NES, 1986(Vol.XIV)pp.285- 290.

Kamei, Tamio:

Malignant mesenchymoma of the larynx, 1990

Tamio Kamei and Sachiko Takahashi

Meyer zum Gottesberge's Head-shaking Test for the Evaluation of Jumbling

- 1991

Kamei, Tamio:

Optokinetic after-nystagmus (OKAN), 1998

T. Kamei, K. Watanabe/Maebashi, Japan

A Review of Delayed Endolymphatic Hydrops

-2000 -

Kamei, Tamio:

Delayed Endolymphatic Hydrops as A Clinical Entity, 2004

Tamio Kamei, and Kenji Watanabe:

A case of delayed endolymphatic hydrops (ipsilateral type) who had unilateral profound deafness of unknown etiology since childhood, 2005

Since 1974 Dr. Tato's and Dr. Claussen's ideas about the further development of neurootology was put into practise by the international NEUROOTOLOGICAL AND EQUILIBRIOMETRIC SOCIETY Reg. with members from many countries of all the world. This society proved to be, an open Society, where those, who are interested in the filed of neurootology, can present and discuss their findings, questions, and theories. From the beginning, several languages for discussion were established in order to keep the exchange of ideas as open as possible. The languages which were authorized according to the statutes as official languages for the International

Neurootological and Equilibriometric Society Reg. were German, English, French, and Spanish. The members of the new Society wanted to reach their targets not only through scientific meetings but also through an own medium of publication.

Since 1996, the Neurootological and Equilibriometric Society reg. has honoured, with the assistance of a Japanese contribution, experienced neurootologists, who have stimulated or promoted neurootology in practical and/or clinical research through their works and examples in a fundamental way. The two prizes are named as follows: 1.) Frenzel-Sakata-Award, 2.) Tato-Claussen-Award. The President of the Board of trustees is Prof. Dr. Dr. em. Eiji Sakata, chair for neurootology, Saitama, Japan.

On March 26th 2004 Professor Emeritus Tamio Kamei, Gunma University, Maebashi, Japan was awarded with the "Tato-Claussen Prize " as a world widely acknowledged clinical researcher with a specific field of research in nystagmus and Meniere's disease.

Thus his decoration lecture had the title : – "Delayed endolymphatic hydrops as a clinical entity" -.

Besides our scientific contacts we appreciated the endeavour of Professor Dr. Tamio Kamei and his wife in the role of cultural mediators , which they for instance fervently practised on me in 1998. This very interesting journey through Japan is a great reminiscence from my visits to Japan.. Amongst others we saw Nikko and also Karuizawa with the big Buddha statue and the big Ginkgo biloba tree.

Concerning Nikko, I remember, that this impressive location is one of the major pilgrimage and tourist centres in Japan, it is situated at the edge of Nikkō National Park. The name Nikkō means "sunlight." The splendour of the place is reflected in the Japanese proverb, "Do not say 'kekko' [magnificent] until you've seen Nikkō." This phrase I remember still today with the friendly image of Mr. and Mrs. Kamei.

We are all mourning for a great physician, a stimulating teacher and an international authority in the field of Otology and Neurootology. Prof. Dr. Tamio Kamei really was a friend, who carved a land mark in the corner stone for his successors, directing towards the modern analysis, therapy and understanding of human neurosensorial dysfunctions.

As his friends and contemporarians we will never forget our friend Prof. Dr. Tamio Kamei from Maebashi, Gunma, Japan. Now and in the future he deserves an honorable mentioning.

Prof. Dr. Claus F. Claussen,
December 16th, 2010